implementation of the scheme during this period is Rs. 275.22 crores.

The non-utilization of a part of the credit is primarily due to appreciation of the US $ vis-a-vis INR and the fact that only 84% of actual expenditure is eligible for disbursement under the World Bank credit agreement. The programme is proposed to be further intensified during the 9th Five Year Plan.

Death of Female Infants in Bihar

5639. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the aditorial 'Ek Sharmnaak Kureeti' published in the Dainik Jagran and other newspapers to the effect that 14 lakh female infants are done to death every year in Bihar and if so, the facts thereof; and

(b) the legislative and other steps proposed to be taken by Government to check the manace ?

THE MINISTER OF TAXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected.

[Translation]

Meeting of Bihar Official

5640. SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether a meeting was held in New Delhi on January 24, 1997 under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Department of Water Resources in connection with floods, soil erosion and development of water resources in Bihar, in which other concerned officials of the Bihar Government and Union Government were also present; and

(b) if so, the decision taken in the above meeting and the action being taken to implement the said decision ?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The issues discussed in the meeting and follow-up action taken are as under :

(i) In the meeting of Joint Team of Experts of Nepal and India held in January, 1997, the two sides have agreed to examine and assess the work-load required for carrying out detailed studies leading to Detailed Project Report to be prepared for Sapta Kosi High Dam.

The matter is being pursued with the Government of Nepal.

(ii) Government of Bihar would re-submit their estimate for undertaking counter protective measures in Bihar territory that would be necessitated due to the proposed implementation of Lalbakeya embankment in Nepal territory.

The revised estimate duly complying with the observations of Ganga Flood Control Commission (GFCC) is awaited from Bihar.

(iii) The scheme to prevent the erosion problem in Madhurapur-Mahendrapur area would be re-submitted through GFCC for reconsideration of Technical Advisory Committee of the Ministry.

Government of Bihar is yet to take further action in the matter.

(iv) The reimbursement claims of Bihar for 1996-97 towards maintenance of Kosi Flood Protection works in Nepal could be released early.

Rs. 69.78 lakhs have been reimbursed to Government of Bihar in February, 1997.

(v) The Drainage scheme for "Construction of sluice gate at Topra-Chaukiya-Paharpur embankment" would be put up for consideration of Steering Committee on Flood Proofing for its inclusion under Flood Proofling Programme.

In the meeting of the Steering Committee held in February, 1997, approval has been accorded for inclusion of this scheme under Flood Proofing Programme.

(vi) Central assistance for erosion problems by river Ganga near village Jhawa on Sonepur-Chapra National Highway could be considered during 9th Plan provided Planning Commission allocates adequate funds for the scheme.

The 9th Plan proposals are still under finalisation.

(vii) The issue of sharing of cost of Piprasi-Pipra ghat Embankment (between Bihar and U.P.) and Mahananda Embankment (between Bihar and West Bengal) would be discussed in the next meeting of the Ganga Flood Control Board.

Ganga Flood Control Commission is initiating action to convene the meeting of the Ganga Flood Control Board.

(viii) Inter-state disputes including those on Damodar Valley project would be discussed in the forthcoming inter-state meeting.

Action is being initiated.

(ix) Bihar Irrigation Commission's report dealing with the availability of water in Ganga at different locations would be examined by Central Water Commission.

These studies are being taken up.

[English]

T-72 Tank

5641. SHRI ADSUL ANANDRAO VITHOBA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether materials, and machines/plants worth crores of rupees are lying unused for the last three years;

(b) whether the cost of items which are used in maintenance has been lying unused;

(c) if so, whether a large number of items costing about 55 crores have been utilised only once in the past three years as also a robotic welding machine as well as the painting plant which cost about 65 lakhs and 1.8 crores respectively has never been put to use;

(d) if so, whether the Government propose to take steps to put to use these unused materials/machines thereby minimising cost of the T-72 tank; and

(e) if not the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (e) T-72 tanks are produced on regular basis utilising inputs and installed facilities. Some components procured for manufacture of the earlier versions of tanks need to be drawn upon. A committee has been constituted to secure the utilisation of these material worth about Rs. 27 crores which have been in stock for the last 3 years.

Consumables are duly drawn for operations maintenance. Critical items of unforeseen breakdown maintenance require to be held in reserve as an insurance to meet contingencies in accordance with established practice.

Use of the robotic welding machine has been impeded by variation in characteristics of input materials. Readjustment of the regimes of the machine is under way. The painting plant has been partially utilised and in relation to the load.

Navigational Route via Brahmaputra connecting Calcutta

5642. SHRI NURUL ISLAM : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a navigational route via Brahmaputra river connecting Calcutta with various North East States, more particularly Assam;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Dhubri to Sadiya stretch of 891 Kms. of river Brahmaputra was declared as National Waterway No.2 in September, 1988. For development and maintenance of the fairway, conservancy works like bandalling, channel marking are being taken up on year to year basis. Floating terminals exist at Dhubri, Jogighopa and Pandu. A scheme sanctioned for additional floating terminals at Dhubri, Joghighopa, Tezpur, Neamati and Dibrugarh is under implementation. The waterway with 45 m width and 2 mtr. LAD is being maintained from Dhubri to Neamati. Cargo services between Calcutta and Pandu are run regularly through Inland Water Transport.

(c) Does not arise.

Ex-Servicemen in Kerala

5643. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of ex-servicemen in Kerala who have not got any job after retirement from the services; and

(b) the action being taken by the Government to rehabilitate them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) As on 31st December, 1996 26,142 ex-Servicemen were registered for employment with the Zila Sainik Boards in Kerala.

(b) Government have taken various steps to provide gainful employment opportunities to the ex-Servicemen. These, inter alia, comprise reservation of posts in the